

TRANSIT PASSENGER REGULATIONS

It is the mission of the employees of the Fort Smith Transit Department to provide safe, efficient, affordable, prompt, friendly, professional and clean public transportation to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Fort Smith, Arkansas.

These regulations are provided to insure the department's mission is held to the highest standard. Your cooperation in abiding by these regulations is greatly appreciated. Failure to abide by these regulations or excessive complaints from citizens or City staff could ultimately result in suspension or discontinued service.

Should it become necessary to address a concern related to these regulations/policies, in most cases, the Transit Director or his designee will make a reasonable attempt to resolve issues either by phone or letter prior to enforcing a suspension of ridership privileges.

SECTION I.

Policies Governing Transit Scheduling

The purpose of the following regulations pertaining to scheduling is to provide fair and equal access to all transit passengers. Additional future restrictions may be placed on individual riders in the event of willful or multiple violations.

1. All paratransit/demand response passenger trips must be scheduled through the Transit office at 783-6464. There could be some lengthy hold times, however please be patient. Callers will be assisted in the order they are received. All calls are subject to audio recording for clarity of conversation.
2. Paratransit/demand response trips are to be scheduled at least one day prior to the requested trip.

General Scheduling Non ADA: Available **Monday** through **Friday** from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. scheduling for next day only). **Saturday** 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Paratransit/ADA Scheduling: Available **Monday** through **Friday** from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; **Saturday** 9:00 am to 4:00 p.m. **Sunday and Holiday** scheduling can be accomplished by leaving your trip request on the answering machine **between the hours 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.** Confirmation is available any time after 5:00 a.m. the following business morning.

3. **Schedule Blocking:** Schedule blocking is prohibited and is defined as scheduling multiple trips to hold or reserve optimum travel times with the intent to use only the most preferred time(s) and to cancel the remaining trips.
4. **Excessive Rescheduling:** Excessive rescheduling is prohibited. Dispatchers will make every effort to accommodate the initial reservation request(s) nearest your desired travel time(s). The department will allow a maximum of three rescheduling occurrences per week. More than three rescheduling occurrences resulting from cancellations made in an untimely fashion or failure to board (no-shows), may affect your ability to schedule demand response services for the remainder of the week.
5. **Future Scheduling:** Passengers are required to make their trip reservations by 3:00 p.m. the previous day, however, Transit Dispatchers have the authority to allow future scheduling for up to five (5) days depending on a review of each clients history with regards to cancellations.
6. **Routine Scheduling:** If a customer schedules repetitive trips on a routine and regular basis, (i.e. going to school, work or medical appointments, traveling to and from the same destinations consistently) routine trip service may be requested. With routine trip service, you may call once to initiate a recurring ride. Fort Smith Transit will schedule the ride on a continuing basis until the request is terminated, or cancellations or no shows become excessive. Providing routine trip service is not a requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act. To ensure that regular casual trip requests are not restricted, FST will place a limit on the number of routine trip service openings that will be available. Routine trip service termination due to excessive cancellations or no shows may result in a loss of reinstatement privileges.
7. **Confirmation:** Confirmation from the dispatcher is required for each trip reservation request. Clients must remain on the phone until the dispatcher has reviewed the request and assigned the appropriate boarding time.
8. **Cancellations:** Cancellations must be made as soon as possible to allow other clients sufficient time to request a ride in your place. A cancellation will be considered a no-show if the Transit office is not notified within one hour of the scheduled pick up time. Early morning cancellations can be made after 6:00 a.m. When cancelling, be sure to clarify the exact trips or time frame to be cancelled. Cancellation numbers will be issued to the caller for verification.
9. **Electronic Surveillance:** All Transit buses are equipped with electronic surveillance devices including cameras and microphones and are only used to view accidents, incidents, and complaints.

SECTION II.

Policies Governing Transit Ridership

The purpose of the following ridership regulations is to provide fair and equal access to all transit passengers. These policies are provided to minimize conflicts and enhance the safety and efficiency of the operations.

1. **Age requirement:** Children seven (7) years of age or younger must be accompanied by someone twelve years of age or older.
2. **Baggage:** Each passenger boarding the bus is limited to what they can carry on in a single trip or at a maximum the equivalent of three (3) grocery bags. Other garments, equipment, instruments or parcels should and will be limited by the driver's discretion based on safety. All baggage or carry-ons should be safely stowed away beneath the passenger's seat or secured so as to limit its movement from the aisle and/or the driver's area. All baggage parcels must remain in the responsible parties' possession and should not be left unattended at any time. Baggage left on the bus will be placed off the bus by Transit staff or law enforcement personnel.
3. **Boarding:** All fixed route and paratransit passengers must be prepared and ready to board when the bus arrives. Passengers should have the correct fare in hand and ready for deposit when boarding.
4. **Boarding paratransit/demand response:** Fort Smith Transit utilizes a thirty (30) minute window. Paratransit/demand response passengers must be ready to board fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled pick-up time and up to fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pick up time. Please call the Transit office if a bus has not arrived fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled pick-up time. However, a no-show penalty will not be assessed if the bus arrives outside the thirty (30) minute window. Passengers are allotted a maximum of two (2) minutes to board. Passengers should have the correct fare in hand and ready for deposit when boarding.
5. **Eating/Beverage:** Eating is not allowed on transit buses. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the bus. All other beverages must be kept in a spill-proof container.
6. **Mobility Device Securement:** Mobility devices to be occupied while in transport are required to be secured to the bus floor and all devices must fall within the dimensions of a common wheelchair of 30 inches wide by 48 inches long measured 2 inches off the ground and a maximum weight of 600 lbs. when occupied. Passengers in mobility devices are required to fasten their safety belts as referenced in section 2 (10) herein.
7. A. Incentive for frequent riders - On Time - Every Time – Provides one free ride (round trip) per month. The incentive requires more than 35 completed trips per month with no service disruptions and absence of any no-show occurrences.

7. B. FST has established trip reservation, cancellation, and no-show procedures that help on-time performance and ride availability.
- **Reservations:** must be made by 3:00 p.m. one day prior to your trip or by 5:00 p.m. for passengers certified as ADA eligible. Reservations will be accepted no more than five (5) days in advance of a ride.
 - **Cancellations:** must be made at least one hour in advance.
 - **No-Show Policy:** encourages a client to follow-through with rides they have scheduled or to cancel a ride at least one hour in advance.

Excused no-shows beyond the riders control:

- The customer is observed by transit staff as being sick.
- A family emergency, verified by transit staff, such as an illness of a family member, death.
- A mobility aid fails and prevents the passenger from accessing the bus system.
- A passenger is late because of experiences associated with connecting transportation, i.e. airplane, etc.
- The passenger encounters adverse weather conditions.
- Acts of God
- Staffing error or other occurrences verified by the Transit Director or designated recipient.
- Other occurrences verified by the Transit Director or designated recipient.

Unexcused no-shows or cancellations when a trip is missed for the following reasons:

- Customer didn't want to travel today.
- Customer changed their mind about using appointment.
- Customer didn't know that he or she had a ride scheduled or was supposed to call to cancel.
- Customer got another ride.
- Customer told someone else he or she was not planning to travel or someone else booked the ride.
- Customer doesn't want to ride with a specific driver or passenger or on a specific vehicle.
- Customer failed to Board within the thirty minute window (fifteen minutes before to fifteen minutes after the schedule pickup time).
- Customer failed to cancel their trip reservation within one hour of the scheduled trip.
- Other occurrences verified by the Transit Director or designated recipient.

Suspensions will begin five (5) business days following the next regularly scheduled Transit Advisory Commission meeting so the client can be notified and have an opportunity to contest the no-show, violation and/or make other travel arrangements.

8. **Personal Care Attendant (PCA):** Passengers requiring a personal care attendant, as so noted on their individual ADA application for eligibility, must be accompanied by a personal care attendant while traveling on Fort Smith Transit vehicles. Fort Smith Transit personnel will provide reasonable assistance for passengers boarding and navigating the transit system. (See Reasonable Assistance in Section IV, Service Definitions)
9. **Priority Seating:** Seats located near the front of each bus marked priority should be reserved for passenger(s) experiencing walking limitations. Passengers are encouraged to avoid using these specific seats unless needed.

10. **Seat-belts:** Seat-belts are required to be worn by all passengers seated in buses equipped with such devices.
11. **Service Animals:** Service animals are permitted on the transit buses. Service animals are specially trained animals that exhibit good behavior. Animals determined to be seriously disruptive will be suspended from the system.
12. **Smoking:** Smoking on the buses is prohibited by City ordinance.
13. **Prohibited Items:** Bringing any item of a dangerous nature on board vehicles or inside any transit facility, including but not limited to: weapons (firearms, knives or swords); flammable liquids; dangerous, toxic or poisonous substances; vessels containing caustic materials, chemicals, acids or alkalis.

SECTION III

Policies Governing Transit Passenger Behavior

The purpose of the following passenger behavior regulations is to ensure all passengers are provided with safe and comfortable transportation. Failure to abide by these policies could result in temporary or permanent suspension of ridership. The department may elect to issue an individual merit waiver program as one method of deterring inappropriate behavior while monitoring changes in passenger demeanor.

1. **Behavior:** Verbally or physically abusive behavior with Transit staff or passengers will not be allowed such as: profanity, outbursts, threatening gestures or threatening words and other disruptive behavior. This list is not intended to be all inclusive. Other behaviors offensive to Transit staff or passengers can be considered verbally or physically abusive.
2. **Interference:** No person may assault, threaten, demand, intimidate, perform unlawful acts, or interfere with a passenger or Transit staff while in the performance of his or her duties. Transit staff has the authority to request that the passengers maintain orderly conduct.
3. **Hygiene:** A passenger may not be allowed on a vehicle if his or her body odor or physical hygiene will disturb the reasonable comfort of other passengers or Transit staff. A passenger will be given notice and an opportunity to correct the odor or hygiene problem prior to discontinuing riding privileges, unless in the judgment of Transit staff, that person places existing passengers in extreme discomfort or is considered a health risk to others. Passengers with mobility devices must maintain such devices in a state of

cleanliness. Passengers requiring a catheter must maintain the catheter in an enclosed space free from public view.

4. **Concerns:** Passenger complaints should be directed to the Transit office. The Transit Director or designee will be responsible for investigating an initial complaint and will respond with the appropriate action as per city and department policy. Passengers may also utilize the city's Request Partners Program which can be accessed through the city's website (www.fortsmithar.gov).
5. **Distractions:** Passengers must avoid or minimize actions that promote distractions to the driver while Transit vehicles are operating in revenue service. Such acts as the usage of a cell phone near the location of a driver is prohibited, however when otherwise used, ringers and voice noise levels must be kept to a minimum. Radios, pagers, electronic games and/or other devices must also be maintained at minimum noise levels. Passengers must remain seated in their traveling position or station until the bus comes to a complete stop and the driver acknowledges further instructions. Sudden moves that alert the driver may result in discontinued service. Passengers are asked not to socialize with the driver while the vehicle is in service. Our drivers are friendly, but please keep in mind that their attention must be on safe driving.
5. **Appropriate Dress:** Passengers may not be allowed on a vehicle if their dress attire may be considered offensive to others, as determined by transit staff. A passenger may be denied transportation for lack of clothing or improperly fit clothing that is excessively tight/small, loose/large, torn or gaping causing inappropriate body parts to become exposed.

The Transit Director is authorized by the Transit Advisory Commission to impose an immediate suspension to mitigate issues involving misconduct, seriously disruptive behavior or illegal acts.

**Actual or threatened physical abuse is a one-time offense.
There will be no second chances.**

SECTION IV.

Service Definitions

Common Wheelchair: A mobility device not wider than 30 inches, not longer than 48 inches, measured 2 inches off the ground and no heavier than 600 lbs. when occupied.

Curb-To-Curb: A service that picks up and delivers passengers at the curb or roadside, as distinguished from door-to-door service. Passenger assistance is not rendered other than for actual boarding and alighting.

Destination: The point or zone at which the trip ends.

Fixed Route: A system in which transit vehicles follow along one (1) of five (5) predetermined routes. It is different from modes of transportation such as taxi cabs or demand responsive transportation, in which each trip may differ in its origin and destination.

Limousine: (Not performed by this agency) Demand responsive public transportation service on an exclusive basis, provided in a vehicle licensed to render that service for hire at rates of fare agreed upon by the operating licensee, its agent, or the chauffeur and the passengers.

Merit/Waiver: Authorization by administration to allow a passenger to continue riding privileges under advised conditions where the department would otherwise have the right to refuse service.

Mobility Device: Any device used to aid in the movement of a person with disabilities such as a wheelchair, walker, scooter, cane, crutches.

Origin: The point or zone at which the trip begins.

Paratransit/Demand Response: Paratransit and demand response are essentially the same service provided by the same bus. Paratransit is defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act which is a requirement by the government to provide equal transportation benefits to individuals with physical or mental disabilities that have limitations which prevent their ability to safely access the fixed routes. This is a system in which curb-to-curb service is provided to patrons who request service by telephone, either for a specific purpose or subscription basis.

Paratransit Plan: A plan required by the Federal Transit Administration, developed by the controlling agency/authority with the assistance of the public, necessary to outline the transportation operations with regards to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act as of 1991, as amended.

Reasonable Assistance: (Provided by this agency) Assisting passengers with positioning of mobility devices, securing seat belt restraint devices, providing minimal navigational instructions and assisting the blind to or from the paratransit/demand response bus. Examples of services beyond Reasonable Assistance (not performed by this agency) include door through door service (with acceptance of the blind, assisting passengers to or from the bus), monitoring passenger's care enroute, navigational assistance beyond minor instructions, assisting with personal items such as groceries, baggage, etc.

Rescheduling Occurrences: The cancellation of a previously scheduled trip that is subsequently changed to an alternate date or time.

Same-Day-Service: (Not performed by this agency) Same-day-service permits a passenger to schedule travel arrangements on the same day as the intended transportation.

Service Animals: Service animals are permitted on the transit buses. Service animals are specially trained animals that assist passengers with specific disabilities. Animals determined to be seriously disruptive will be suspended from the system.

Taxi Cab: (Not performed by this agency) Demand responsive public transportation service on an exclusive basis, in a vehicle licensed to render that service.

Fort Smith Transit Appeal Process

The Fort Smith Transit Department has established an appeals process to provide individuals with grievances an opportunity to have their issues reviewed by a third party.

All grievances must first be filed in writing to the Transit Director within ten (10) business days of the alleged infraction. This will enable the director to ensure all information relating to the issue(s) have been apparent in the initial decision. If the issue can then be resolved to the satisfaction of the appellant, no further action will be necessary. If a resolution cannot be reached with the director within ten (10) business days, an appeal may be addressed by the Transit Advisory Commission and reviewed on a date determined by the chairperson. If grievances cannot be resolved after the above processes have been exhausted, the issue(s) may be addressed by City Administration.

Grievances may be addressed to the Fort Smith Transit Department, P.O. Box 1908 Fort Smith, AR 72902 or by email to transit@fortsmithar.gov

